

**NRCS  
CONSERVATION PROGRAMS  
MANUAL**

**PART 513**

**RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT  
(RC&D)**

**PROGRAM**

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## **Part 513 - Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

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## **Part 513 - Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart A RC&D Program Administration**

#### **513.00 Forward**

This manual, issued by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), describes USDA policies and procedures for administering the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program as authorized in Public Law 107–171. The role of NRCS is addressed in detail because specific authorities regarding RC&D Program administration are delegated to NRCS by the Secretary of Agriculture. However, RC&D Program assistance should be provided by other USDA agencies consistent with their mission and program authorities. Several of these agencies referenced in this manual include Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), Economic Research Service (ERS), Farm Services Agency (FSA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Forest Service (FS), Rural Utilities Service (RUS), Rural Business Cooperative Service (RBS), Rural Housing Service (RHS), and the Office of Community Development (OCD).

This manual focuses on policy and procedural requirements within Federal rules and regulations. All interpretations of this manual should be made within the intent of Public Law 107–171 and the sense of Congress. If an unusual situation arises or a special condition exists, a letter must be sent to the Chief of NRCS requesting clarification or seeking an exception by providing adequate rationale for the request.

Revisions of the National RC&D Manual will be handled by page inserts transmitted as amendments to the manual.

“RC&D — “Partnerships Serving America’s Communities!”

## **513.01 Vision and Mission for the RC&D Program**

### **a USDA Intent**

The intent of USDA is to develop a cost-effective Federal Government delivery system that builds local working relationships for conserving and developing natural resources and that enhances the social, economic, and environmental conditions in the United States.

### **b RC&D Vision**

The RC&D vision is as follows:

- People helping people help themselves to develop an enhanced quality of life through the RC&D Program by providing social, environmental and economic benefits to communities and surrounding areas.
- Serving communities of the United States, its territories, and tribal nations by providing local benefits vital to the health and well being of the community. Communities rely on USDA as one of many valuable partners to build productive working relationships and to conserve and develop natural resources.
- Having every RC&D Council develop productive working relationships to balance natural resource conservation and development. These Councils analyze community needs, develop plans to meet these needs, and coordinate the resources required to accomplish these plans. They also share their knowledge and experience with tribal nations, others in the same geographic area, in the State, and across the United States.

### **c RC&D Federal Program Mission**

The mission of the RC&D program is to make available the total resources of USDA and other public and private partnerships to build relationships, create financial leverage, and increase the ability of communities to meet their regionally identified resource conservation and development needs.

## **513.02 Federal Legislative Authorities Relating to the RC&D Program**

### **a Authorities for the RC&D**

The RC&D Program was first authorized by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, Public Law 87–703. Program authority is also carried out in accordance with the following public laws:

- Public Law 97–98, The Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, Sections 1528–1538.
- Public Law 104–127, The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Section 383. (The program was reauthorized through 2002 with the passage of this law.)
- Public Law 107–171, Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Sections 1528–1537. (The program was permanently authorized with the passage of this law.)

### **b Secretary of Agriculture**

The Secretary of Agriculture is charged with the responsibility for the RC&D Program under the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, Public Law 97–98, 16 U.S.C. 3451–3461, as amended by Public Law 101–624, Section 1452, and Public Law 107–171, Section 1530. In carrying out this responsibility, the Secretary may:

- Provide technical assistance to any council to assist in developing and implementing an Area Plan for that area.
- Cooperate with other departments and agencies of the Federal Government, State, and local units of government, local Indian tribes, and with local nonprofit organizations in conducting surveys and inventories, disseminating information, and developing Area Plans.
- Assist in carrying out an Area Plan approved by the Secretary for any designated area by providing technical and financial assistance to any council.
- Enter into agreements with councils.

### **c RC&D Area Designation**

Legislation permits the designation of 450 RC&D areas nationwide. Program funding and USDA partnerships dictate how many of these areas can receive technical assistance.

### **d RC&D Council Limitations**

RC&D Council is defined as a nonprofit entity (including an affiliate of the entity) operating in a State that is

Established by volunteers or representatives of States, local units of government, Indian tribes, or local nonprofit organizations to carry out an Area Plan in a designated area.

Designated by the chief executive officer or legislature of the State to receive technical assistance and financial assistance.

The USDA position is that all RC&D Councils seek and utilize appropriate legal documents in building formal partnerships, and as needed, utilize local, State, and Federal statutory means to accomplish the vision and mission of the RC&D Program.

**e Nonprofit Status**

To receive NRCS Federal technical or financial assistance, an RC&D Council for a designated area must be a nonprofit corporation according to Public Law 107–171. As the administering agency, NRCS cannot provide assistance to a Council that is not incorporated as nonprofit. A “nonprofit organization” as defined in Public Law 107–171, section 1528 (8), is any organization that is:

“Described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and,

Exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.”

Each Council should carefully review the options in the sections of the Internal Revenue Code referenced above to ensure they choose the category that meets the objectives of the organization.



### **513.03 Delegations of Authority**

#### **a Delegation to the Chief of NRCS**

The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) the responsibility for administering the RC&D Program except for the RC&D Loan Program assigned to the Rural Utilities Service. The loan program has not received appropriations since 1992.

#### **b RC&D Area Additions**

The Secretary of Agriculture has reserved the authority to designate new RC&D Areas and to withdraw designation for assistance.

#### **c RC&D Area Boundary Adjustments**

The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated to the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment the authority to approve adjustments to the designated boundaries of RC&D Areas.

#### **d Delegations to Other USDA Agencies**

The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated to the Forest Service the responsibility for helping RC&D Areas implement their Area Plan as it addresses forestry resources (7 CFR, Section 2.6 (a)(23)(c)(ii)). The Forest Service has further defined the responsibility the agency has chosen to take (Forest Service Manual – FSM 3600).

## **513.04 - RC&D Roles and Responsibilities**

### **a RC&D Area Offices**

Office location should be decided by mutual agreement between the State Conservationist and the RC&D Council. However, RC&D Offices are subject to the Federal guidelines for leasing and acquisition of property when Federal funds are used. If consensus cannot be reached regarding office location and only Federal funds are to be used, NRCS may act independently to secure office space within the RC&D Area. The office can be in a Federal or non-Federal location. The RC&D Area Office can be located in an USDA Field Service Center but must be located in space separately identified from NRCS offices and other USDA agencies consistent with its status as a non-government organization. It should be clearly identified as an RC&D Area Office bearing the name of the designated Area.

### **b RC&D Staff**

USDA will provide a Federal presence in each authorized RC&D Area. At a minimum, an RC&D Coordinator will be provided for each Area. NRCS recognizes the critical role of clerical/administrative staff. An effort will be made to ensure that each RC&D Area has at least part-time clerical assistance.

The RC&D Coordinator is a USDA employee under the administration of NRCS. NRCS National Headquarters (NHQ) RC&D leadership may grant exceptions to this based on written justification by the State Conservationist. The coordinator is the primary liaison between USDA and the Council.

The USDA Coordinator must use only the official title “RC&D Coordinator,” and the USDA-provided clerical assistant has the official title “office assistant,” “secretary,” or other similar titles approved by OPM or USDA.

The USDA-provided RC&D staff assists the Council in direct support of the Area Plan, Annual Plan of Work, and locally identified priorities.

Government employees assist the Council within the ethics and regulations governing Federal employees.

### **c RC&D Council**

To achieve the vision and mission of the RC&D Program, the RC&D Council is furnished with technical assistance by Federal employee of USDA and appropriate basic support by USDA. The Council is responsible for all decision and activities of the nonprofit organization. The Council is responsible for all Council correspondence, Council employees, and Council financial and related business management. The Council is accountable for making all employment and financial decisions relating to the Council Area Plan, projects, or other Council activities, and complying with Civil Rights requirements associated with receipt of Federal technical or financial assistance.

## **513.05 USDA RC&D Policy Advisory Board (PAB) and Working Group**

### **a Policy Advisory Board (PAB) Mission**

The USDA Policy Advisory Board (PAB) was re-established in USDA regulation 1042–76 dated July 14, 1997, and revised on August 18, 2000. This regulation established the PAB as directed in 16 U.S. C. Section 3457. This regulation also established the RC&D Working Group. The Board serves as the single interagency forum for advising and recommending policy to the Secretary regarding the administration of the RC&D Program, Public Law 107–171, Section 1533. The PAB is an internal Federal entity.

### **b PAB Composition**

The Board is composed of the following members of the USDA staff:

- Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE).
- Two Senior Executives, preferably administrators, selected by their respective Under Secretaries from each of the following mission areas:
  - Natural Resources and Environment (NRE)
  - Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
  - Research, Education and Economics
  - Rural Development
  - Food Nutrition and Consumer Services

To enhance USDA coordination, the Board may add members from other USDA mission areas. The Under Secretary for NRE chairs the Board. The Director of the Resource Conservation and Community Development Division, NRCS, serves as the executive secretary.

### **c PAB Mission**

The mission of the USDA RC&D PAB shall be to provide policy advice for the NRCS RC&D Program and to integrate the RC&D Program effectively and appropriately into all relevant USDA community development activities. In carrying out this mission, the PAB will:

- Help ensure that policies are responsive to the needs of local RC&D Councils and USDA field personnel, and in so doing, meet the development needs of the local community.
- Seek to ensure that all relevant USDA agencies, consistent with their missions and authorities, can help the program add as much value as possible at the local level.
- Facilitate the interaction among RC&D Councils and Associations, USDA agencies, and the Secretary.
- Stimulate interest among USDA agencies.
- Support appropriate actions that coordinate and integrate programmatic activities, where appropriate (for example, outreach or other national initiatives).
- Provide advice and guidance to the Chief of NRCS as the final decisionmaker for the RC&D Program and as the official delegated responsibility for the program by the Secretary.

**d USDA Working Group**

The USDA RC&D Working Group is chaired by NRCS and consists of USDA employees representing member agencies of the PAB. The RC&D Working Group:

- Prepares reports and proposals for the PAB, either at the Board's request or at the Working Group's own initiative.
- Works closely with State, regional, and national associations of RC&D Councils and other allied groups to address identified needs and concerns.
- Conveys needs and concerns of the Councils to the PAB.
- Assists NRCS in the analysis and consideration of program implementation issues and details.
- Assists in review and evaluation of RC&D applicants and provides recommendations to NRCS and the PAB.
- Provides staff support for the RC&D PAB, as appropriate.
- Assists in the integration of relevant USDA programmatic activities with the RC&D Program.

## 513.06 USDA Agencies

### a General

The following agencies have signed a memorandum of understanding outlining their responsibilities for areas of mutual interest relating to conservation and rural development. Other agencies may provide financial and/or technical assistance consistent with their missions to RC&D Councils:

- Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES)
- Economic Research Service (ERS)
- Farm Services Agency (FSA)
- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
- Forest Service (FS)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Rural Development (RD) Agencies

Other USDA agencies may participate in the RC&D Program.

### b NRCS Responsibilities

NRCS responsibilities are described throughout this manual as they affect staffing or program administration. Specific responsibilities are described in Section [513.07](#).

### c AMS Responsibilities

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) provides standardization, grading and marketing news services for the following commodities: cotton, dairy, fruit and vegetables, livestock, seed, poultry, and tobacco. AMS commodity divisions oversee marketing agreements and orders, administer research and promotion programs, and purchase commodities for Federal food programs.

The AMS Science and Technology Division provides centralized scientific support to AMS programs, including laboratory analyses, laboratory quality assurance, coordination of scientific research conducted by other agencies for AMS, and statistical and mathematical consulting services. The division collects and analyzes data about pesticide residue levels in agricultural commodities and administers the Pesticide Recordkeeping program, which requires all certified private applicators of federally restricted-use pesticides to maintain a record of all applications.

The AMS Transportation and Marketing Division works to ensure that there is an efficient transportation system for rural America that begins at the farm gate, moves agricultural and other rural products through the Nation's highways, railroads, airports, and waterways, and into the domestic and international marketplace. The division supplies research and technical information to producers, producer groups, shippers, exporters, rural communities, carriers, government agencies, and universities. The division administers a program providing financial grants to States for marketing improvements and assists in the planning and design of marketing facilities, processes, and methods in cooperation with State and local governments, universities, farmer

groups, and other segments of the U.S. food industry. This program enhances the overall effectiveness of the food marketing system, provides better quality products to the consumer at reasonable cost, improves market access for growers with small- to medium-sized farms, and promotes regional economic development.

Further information about AMS can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/>.

#### **d ARS Responsibilities**

ARS conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provides information access and dissemination to ensure high-quality, safe food and other agricultural products, to assess the nutritional needs of Americans, to sustain a competitive agricultural economy, to enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and to provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole. ARS is interested in working with RC&D Councils, particularly in the area of technology transfer.

Further information about ARS can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/>.

#### **e CSREES Responsibilities**

The CSREES mission emphasizes partnerships with the public and private sectors to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources. CSREES programs:

- Increase and provide access to scientific knowledge.
- Strengthen the capabilities of land-grant and other institutions in research, extension, and higher education.
- Increase access to and use of improved communication and network systems.
- Promote informed decisionmaking by producers, families, communities, and other customers.

The CSREES vision is to improve economic, environmental, and social conditions nationally and globally. These conditions include:

- Improved agricultural and other economic enterprises.
- Safer, cleaner water, food, and air.
- Enhanced stewardship and management of natural resources.
- Healthier, more responsible and more productive individuals, families, and communities.
- A stable, secure, diverse, and affordable national food supply.

CSREES research, extension, and education leadership is provided through programs in:

- Plant and Animal Production, Protection, and Processing
- Natural Resources and Environment; Rural, Economic and Social Development
- Families, 4-H, and Nutrition
- Partnerships
- Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management
- Science and Education Resources Development
- Communications, Technology, and Distance Education

Further information about CSREES can be found on the Internet at <http://www.reeusda.gov/>.

## **f ERS Responsibilities**

ERS provides economic analysis on efficiency, efficacy, and equity issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural development to improve public and private decisionmaking. ERS performs feasibility and special studies leading to the adaptation of new enterprises and activities. These studies can be useful and applicable to RC&D Areas throughout the United States.

Further information about ERS can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/>.

## **g FSA Responsibilities**

The FSA supports American farmers through the following programs that improve the economic stability of agriculture and the environment:

- Commodity programs
- Farmer operating and emergency loans
- Conservation, domestic and overseas food assistance
- Disaster programs

These programs help farmers:

- Produce an adequate food supply.
- Compete for export sales of commodities in the world marketplace.
- Keep consumer prices reasonable while caring for the environment and natural resources.

FSA, through its State Committees, encourages county FSA committees to assist in developing local leadership and in arranging for appropriate assistance in developing RC&D Area Plans.

FSA can offer eligible farmers and ranchers agreements for converting farmland to such conservation uses as grassland, forestland, and wildlife habitat. Within available funding and its responsibilities, FSA will cost-share to assist owners and operators in the RC&D Area in accelerating the conservation treatment on land units as set forth in the Area Plan, and in the converting cropland to better more efficient uses of soil and water.

RC&D Councils should cooperate with their local Soil and Water Conservation Districts when working on these issues.

Further information about FSA can be found on the Internet at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/default.asp>.

## **h FNS Responsibilities**

In partnership with cooperating organizations, FNS reduces hunger and food insecurity by providing children and needy families access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

The Food and Nutrition Service administers the 15 food assistance programs of USDA. These programs, which serve one in six Americans, represent our Nation's commitment to the principle that no one in our country should fear hunger or experience want. They provide a safety net for people in need.

The goals of the program are to provide needy persons with access to a more nutritious diet, to improve the eating habits of the Nation's children, and to help America's farmers by providing an outlet for the distribution of food purchased under farmer assistance authorities.

Further information about FNS can be found on the Internet at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>.

## **i FS Responsibilities**

FS provides technical and financial assistance to the local RC&D Councils regarding community capacity, recreation, forestry, and related natural resource issues. Technical assistance provided by FS strengthens the Councils' ability to meet the goals of their Area Plans. FS, either directly or in cooperation with State forestry agencies or sponsors, participates in RC&D Area Planning and project planning and implementation. FS conducts special studies and research in issues related to natural resource protection, reforestation, management, development, and utilization (with emphasis on multiple use) of all forest lands in approved RC&D Areas. This includes National Forests and National Grasslands when they are involved and segments of land in or adjacent to such lands.

Further information about the FS can be found on the Internet at <http://www.fs.fed.us/>.

## **j RD Responsibilities**

The Rural Development agencies, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Office of Community Development, Rural Housing Service, and Rural Utilities Service have many interests and activities in common with the RC&D Program.

The mission of the **Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)** is "to enhance the quality of life for rural Americans by providing leadership in building competitive businesses, including sustainable cooperatives, that can prosper in the global marketplace." They meet these goals by:

- Investing financial resources and providing technical assistance to businesses and cooperatives located in rural communities.
- Establishing strategic alliances and partnerships that leverage public, private, and cooperative resources to create jobs and stimulate rural economic activity.

More information about the RBS can be found on the Internet at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/oa/oadir.htm>.

The **Office of Community Development (OCD)** is part of USDA's Rural Development mission area. OCD provides leadership in the delivery of community development support through Rural Development's field offices to rural communities across the United States. OCD provides this service by:

- Implementing special initiatives that demonstrate effective methods of building vital rural communities.
- Disseminating information about effective rural community and economic development strategies and methods.
- Promoting networking among rural communities and rural development practitioners.

OCD operates special initiatives to demonstrate effective community development techniques and to address unique and pressing economic development issues, including:



- Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC)
- National Centers of Excellence
- National Centers of Excellence Tribal College Project
- Rural Economic Action Program (REAP)

More information about the OCD can be found on the Internet at

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ocd/index.html>.

The **Rural Housing Service** (RHS) works with a wide variety of public and nonprofit organizations to provide housing options to communities throughout rural America.

Organizations eligible to apply for RHS funds include:

- Local and State governmental entities
- Nonprofit groups, such as community development organizations and associations
- Private corporations
- Cooperatives operating on a not-for-profit basis; and federally recognized Native American groups

Further information about RHS can be found on the Internet at

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/index.html>.

The **Rural Utilities Service** (RUS) is the Federal "point" agency for rural infrastructure assistance in electricity, water, and telecommunications. As a Federal credit agency in USDA, RUS provides a leadership role in lending and providing technical guidance for the rural utilities industries.

Currently, RUS has a direct relationship with RC&D through the RC&D loan program. The RC&D loan program was established to provide loans to support desirable land use, resource enterprise adjustments, and economic and social development in the RC&D Area. RC&D loans for recreational development may be made only to public bodies for water-based recreational and fish and wildlife development in areas where NRCS is providing RC&D assistance. This assistance is provided by the RD director having responsibility for the county in which the RC&D project is located. Matching funds are not required from other Federal agencies, but loan funds may be used in projects receiving funds from any private, commercial, or public States. Although, this program exists, it has not received funding from Congress since 1992.

More information about RUS can be found on the Internet at

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rus/index.html>.

## 513.07 NRCS Responsibilities

### a National Headquarters

The following table gives NHQ responsibilities:

Position	Description of Responsibilities
NRCS Chief	The Chief may designate responsibility for overall RC&D Program management through the Deputy Chief for Programs to the Director of the Resource Conservation and Community Development Division (RCCD) to direct a department-wide RC&D Program, serve as executive secretary of the PAB, and direct actions of the USDA RC&D Working Group.
National RC&D Program Manager	Through the Director of RCCD, the National Program Manager recommends policy, allocates funds, and assists Regional staff and State Program Managers to improve the efficiency of the program operation.
National RC&D Program Analyst	The RC&D Program Analyst collects, analyzes, and maintains program data and information, including RC&D Area applications and Area boundary adjustments. The analyst provides support to the USDA RC&D Policy Advisory Board and the interagency Working Group.
National RC&D Liaison	The National RC&D Liaison represents NRCS in long-term and short-term planning activities with the National Association of RC&D Councils to increase program visibility, coordination, and interagency cooperation. The Liaison also assesses training needs for Coordinators and guides the NRCS Workload Analysis process for the RC&D Program.
National RC&D Staff	<p>An important role of the National RC&amp;D Headquarters staff is working with other Federal agencies and other national organizations at the national level. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring ways for other agencies to become involved in the program.</li> <li>• Explaining program policy.</li> <li>• Directing assistance from these agencies.</li> </ul> <p>They work to make RC&amp;D a USDA program.</p> <p>National RC&amp;D staff attend PAB meetings and are members of the USDA RC&amp;D Working Group.</p>

**b NRCS Regional Offices**

The Regional Operations Partnership Liaison or designated regional staff person is a point of contact for regional issues. The regional staff person:

- Facilitates communications with RC&D Councils and other key stakeholders and ensures that their local priorities are considered in regional and agency strategic plans.
- Analyzes strategic issues and public policies that affect the RC&D Program, NRCS customers, and USDA partnerships.
- Coordinates and facilitates the development of business plans across all organizational levels to ensure that program funds are addressed, especially for interstate and interregional activities.
- Facilitates consistent program delivery and application of programmatic rules and regulations across State and regional boundaries.
- Helps in developing and implementing communication plans that contribute to communicating consistent and effective messages.
- Develops and enhances partnerships at all levels to address effectively the locally identified natural resource issues and concerns.
- Ensures integrated and coordinated approach to outreach activities.
- Represents NRCS in long- and short-term planning activities with the regional RC&D associations.
- Assists with Regional Association capacity building efforts.

**c NRCS State Offices**

NRCS State Office responsibilities are shown in the following table.

Position	Description of Responsibilities
State Conservationist	State Conservationist's are responsible for administering and implementing the RC&D Program within a State.
RC&D State Program Manager	<p>The NRCS RC&amp;D Program Manager is responsible for carrying out and managing the overall operation of the RC&amp;D Program for NRCS in the State as directed by national policy and by the State Conservationist. The job requires that the NRCS Manager stresses the positive and encourages innovation to carry out the mission and vision of the RC&amp;D Program. The position consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Direction—Provides policy interpretation and training to RC&amp;D staff.</li> <li>• Fund Management—Ensures that funds allocated to the State are used in accordance with policy and used to carry out goals and objectives in the Councils' Area Plans and Plans of Work.</li> <li>• Program Operation—Oversees production-based annual Plan of Work, dollars received, and progress reported.</li> <li>• Project Planning—Determines the adequacy of project planning and makes changes in planning procedures where necessary, and ensures that management is responsive to requests for NRCS and USDA technical assistance from Councils.</li> <li>• Communication—Keeps the State Conservationist, Regional and NHQ RC&amp;D staffs, and USDA partnership agencies informed of progress, accomplishments, and activities in the State.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency Contact—Acts as the NRCS contact with other agencies, particularly other USDA agencies, at the State level; and employs methods that support their participation in the RC&amp;D Program.</li> <li>• Evaluates RC&amp;D Areas—Monitors the viability of each RC&amp;D Area for continued Federal funding based on progress toward accomplishing goals and objectives. Makes recommendations to the State Conservationist about improving, expanding, or terminating of a designated area.</li> <li>• Works with Councils —Ensures that Councils are aware of their obligations and how they can be inclusive, nondiscriminatory, and reflective of the population they are serving.</li> <li>• State Associations—Serve as the State Office point of contact for State RC&amp;D Associations.</li> <li>• Training and Equipment—Provides opportunities for RC&amp;D staff and Council members to receive appropriate training, supports traditional and nontraditional training for RC&amp;D staff that help to implement Council's projects, and provides for needed equipment for RC&amp;D staff to carry out the job.</li> <li>• The Program Manager encourages Coordinators to network with other NRCS offices, agencies, and organizations in and out of the RC&amp;D Area, which leads to the implementation of projects.</li> <li>• The Program Manager fully understands and supports the uniqueness of RC&amp;D in the Department and within overall NRCS responsibilities and promotes awareness, understanding, and support by NRCS and USDA management and field staff.</li> <li>• Recognizes and actively uses the RC&amp;D Program relationships to strengthen and broaden overall visibility, connectivity and outreach to community-based organizations, regional organizations, and other community audiences and entities.</li> </ul>
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#### **d USDA/RC&D Staff Supervisors**

To supervise RC&D staff effectively, supervisors need to understand that Coordinators provide direct assistance to the RC&D Councils for successful implementation of their mission, vision, Area Plan, and Annual Plan of Work. Supervisors should:

- Know the purposes and goals of the RC&D Program, both nationally and within their State.
- Ensure the Coordinator assists the Council in successfully implementing its Annual Plan of Work.
- Require Coordinators to keep their supervisors informed of activities and progress.

- Ensure the Coordinator has a good working relationship with other USDA field office employees in the RC&D Area. Educate members of the USDA field staff as to why they need to be part of the RC&D effort.
- Schedule assistance from State and other NRCS offices when necessary and encourage the Coordinator to look elsewhere for assistance whenever possible. Ensure that needed NRCS assistance is included in appropriate Plans of Work. Include the requisite NRCS assistance in outreach plans and Plans of Work as appropriate.
- Educate USDA field staff on their role and responsibilities in the RC&D effort.
- Schedule RC&D-related training for RC&D staff and other NRCS staff.

#### **e RC&D Coordinator**

The RC&D Coordinator is the designated USDA representative under the administration of NRCS and serves as the liaison between USDA and the RC&D Council. The Coordinator is responsible for supervising all USDA staff assigned to the RC&D Office and for ensuring that all federally assisted activities are carried out in accordance with applicable statutes. The Coordinator maintains knowledge of and serves as the primary point of access to USDA programs that support the RC&D Council Plan. As such, the Coordinator serves as:

- Clarifier—Ensuring that the appropriate division of responsibilities between USDA and the RC&D Council is clearly understood and observed.
- Motivator—Encouraging and improving the capabilities of people in the RC&D Area to plan, develop, and carry out their programs for resource conservation and development.
- Innovator—Developing feasible and practical ideas and methods to achieve Council goals and objectives.
- Facilitator—Helping designated RC&D Councils organize and successfully implement RC&D projects by seeking assistance within USDA or other government and non-government sources.
- Communicator—Informing RC&D Council of progress, problems, and opportunities associated with all aspects of the RC&D Program operation within the Area.
- Advisor—Assisting the Council in carrying out its vision, mission, objectives, and goals by providing guidance and advice to the RC&D Council. However, the Coordinator can not assume responsibilities reserved for local leaders serving voluntarily on RC&D Councils or related committees.
- Capacity builder—Encouraging and helping Council members to improve their capacity (knowledge and skills) and in developing local leadership so that they can carry out the RC&D Program. This is accomplished by direct on-the-job training and by encouraging Council members and local leaders to take advantage of local training opportunities and attend training sessions at State, regional, and national RC&D meetings.

The Coordinator plays a unique role in working with the RC&D Council. As a Federal employee, the Coordinator needs to be aware of limitations regarding certain activities.

- The Coordinator can help develop an inventory of projects worthy of funding, help the Council identify prospective Federal and non-Federal funding sources, work on the justifying documents, and find out how one applies for such a grant and help compile the information needed for the grant application package.
- The Coordinator may serve as a technical project coordinator.
- The Coordinator may provide day-to-day direction for the implementation of the Council's Area Plan and Annual Plan of Work.

- The Coordinator may not directly manage the human or financial resources of an RC&D Council, nor lobby any form of government on behalf of the RC&D Council, nor in any other way commit the RC&D Council to any action or agreement regardless of the intent by the RC&D Council. This means that the Coordinator cannot personally engage in fundraising on behalf of the Council.

Since each Council is a unique group, working with it demands special skills to meet the Council's particular needs. Successful Coordinators must be able to—

- Prepare Annual Plans of Work, project plans, and assisting the Council in revising and updating the Area Plan.
- Know members individually and get them involved in the process.
- Listen to the Council and communicate its needs and concerns to the Program Manager and others as appropriate.
- Respond to the Council's direction and assist it in working on its priorities. (Note: Coordinators do not to make decisions for the Council.)
- Help the Council maintain the focus on working toward stated goals and objectives.
- Assist the RC&D Council with board development.
- Encourage the inclusion of all groups and individuals in the RC&D Program.
- Assist the RC&D Council in understanding and implementing its EEO, civil rights, outreach, and environmental justice responsibilities.
- Facilitate project coordination. (This can include develop the needs assessment, locate and secure resources, partnership development, public relations activities, and implementation, administration, and evaluation of projects.)
- Report progress to USDA through NRCS reporting systems.
- Provide advice to the Council on fiscal activities, including projects, as outlined in the Area Plan.
- Understand the principles of nonprofit management in order to help refer the Council to appropriate sources of information or assistance on nonprofit management issues.

#### **f RC&D Office Assistant (Clerk or Secretary)**

The Office Assistant (Clerk or Secretary) plays a vital role and is a key to the success of the RC&D Program.

In general, this employee does the following:

- Provides clerical and administrative support for the RC&D Office.
- Assists the Council and Coordinator in carrying out the vision, mission, objectives, and goals of the Area Plan.
- Assists the Coordinator, Council, and committees with project tasks.

The employee may be full-time or part-time employee of NRCS. If the employee is a part-time NRCS employees, the employee may also work part-time for the RC&D Council. The employee needs to be very careful in execution of duties and must be aware of relevant ethics rules. If employed by USDA, the employee is supervised and directed by the RC&D Coordinator and subject to the responsibilities and limitations of Federal employees. If the employee is not a federal employee, they are supervised by the RC&D Council (see 513.08 b).





## **513.08 Other Issues Relating to USDA Employees**

### **a Ethics**

The following is guidance for RC&D employees on ethical conduct:

- Federal employees are to conform to the high standards set for people in public service. Laws, regulations, and policies ensure the public that Federal employees will not engage in any actions that create or appear to create an impropriety. Violations of ethics laws or regulations may subject Federal employees to civil and/or criminal penalties as well as removal from office. Partnership arrangements, such as are found in the RC&D Program, can also result in conflicts with the requirements of appropriation laws.
- All USDA employees are encouraged to become familiar with the information found at the USDA ethics Website at <http://www.usda.gov/ethics/index.htm> and the NRCS ethics training Website at <http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/ethics/>.

Council members are also encouraged to become familiar with this information.

### **b Relationship to Council Employees**

Councils may hire employees directly. These employees interact with NRCS and other USDA staff. Federal staff members do not directly supervise Council employees. The Council employees are supervised by the Council. The coordinator may provide day-to-day guidance regarding implementation of the Council's Area Plan and Annual Plan of Work. The coordinator may provide technical guidance to Council employees to ensure that projects are carried out according to grant guidelines. A Federal employee cannot directly hire, fire, or rate the performance of a non-Federal employee of the Council. As primary recipients of Federal assistance, Councils must comply with applicable Civil Rights laws related to hiring practices.

**Subpart B Participation and Eligibility Requirements  
for the Establishment of an RC&D Area**

**513.10 Establishment of the RC&D Area**

**513.11 Application for RC&D Program Assistance**

**513.12 Application Format and Content**

**513.13 Constitution and Bylaws**

**513.14 Nonprofit Status**

**513.15 Roles and Responsibility of RC&D Councils**

## **Subpart B Participation and Eligibility Requirements for the Establishment of an RC&D Area**

### **513.10 Establishment of the RC&D Area**

#### **a General**

RC&D Program assistance can be provided in geographical areas designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. Limited assistance can be provided to applicant areas when resources become available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

#### **b Size and Configuration**

The size and configuration of an area must be based on the sponsors' assessment of rural development needs, institutional arrangements, and the natural resources of the region. Boundaries of an RC&D Area are established on a multijurisdictional basis to make the most efficient use of plans relating to land conservation, water management, community development, and environmental enhancement.

#### **c Eligible Sponsors**

Eligible sponsors may include public and private agencies and organizations, such as counties, parishes, towns, boroughs, conservation districts, other special districts, Councils of government, regional planning bodies, municipalities, local nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribal bodies. All of these are encouraged to be applicant sponsors of the RC&D Area, but they are not required to do so. During the application process, sponsors may be added or deleted at any time. Strong support and endorsement from a broad cross section of units of governments and organizations in the Area are desirable. Applications that include diverse groups of sponsors will be considered to be more competitive when only a limited number of areas can be designated.

#### **d Sponsor Responsibilities**

Sponsors should first request assistance from USDA through their State Conservationist in preparing the RC&D application. Sponsors must assess local interest and prepare and submit an application for assistance. Their initiative, dedication, and eventual inclusiveness of membership will determine the success of the RC&D Program in their Area.

Sponsors are expected first to form an RC&D steering committee that can interact with NRCS and USDA. An ad hoc RC&D steering committee is normally established as soon as the public expresses a desire to proceed with an application for RC&D Program assistance. When the steering committee has adopted a constitution or articles of incorporation and bylaws and has incorporated as nonprofit, it is considered to be an RC&D Council.

#### **e Constitution or Articles of Incorporation**

According to Public Law 107-171, the RC&D Council is required to incorporate as a nonprofit entity under the IRS code (see 513.02e). The RC&D Council is to follow all relevant laws and

regulations when it becomes incorporated. This may require Councils to have a constitution or articles of incorporation and bylaws.

#### **f USDA Responsibilities**

NRCS and other USDA agency personnel will assist the sponsors in preparing their application for program assistance. The State Conservationist will assign an NRCS employee to assist the RC&D Council and steering committee in developing the application. The State Conservationist will facilitate USDA assistance. USDA will provide ongoing assistance as appropriate to applicant RC&D Areas.

The State Conservationist forwards the application to the Chief of NRCS, attention Director, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division. When available funding permits designation of new areas, the Chief sends all applications to the Secretary with a recommendation for approval.

#### **g Area Designation**

Designation by the Secretary allows Federal RC&D funds in the form of technical and/or financial assistance to be spent in the area. These funds provide for establishing and staffing an RC&D Office, assisting in the development of the RC&D Area Plan and ongoing technical assistance to carry out the Council's work plan. When sufficient funds are appropriated, funds for additional staff and/or financial assistance will be provided. Designation by the Secretary authorizes the RC&D Area for direct Federal assistance from USDA.

#### **h Application as an Area Plan**

In the absence of a formally adopted plan, the application may be considered as the Area Plan for the first three years after the designation of the RC&D Area.

## **513.11 Application for RC&D Program Assistance**

### **a Application for Area Designation**

Application for designation of an RC&D Area is made by the steering committee or RC&D Council that represents the local sponsors, through the State Conservationist, to the Secretary of Agriculture. The application should include a general description of the area, define the resources, opportunities, and challenges of the region; and present the goals and objectives defined by the Council to address priority concerns.

### **b Public Participation**

A public participation process must be an integral part of the resource opportunities and Area Plan application development. This helps to ensure that the resulting Council goals and objectives reflect the priority concerns of the region.

### **c Sponsor Signatures**

All sponsoring organizations must sign the application. Comments should be solicited from the State government. It is recommended that the State Conservationist work with the State government to establish a single point of contact for issues regarding the RC&D Councils in the State.

### **d Application Signatures**

Applications may be submitted through the State Conservationist to the National RC&D Office anytime and will be kept on file for five years. Applications will be considered for designation as USDA budgets permit. Applications not designated within the five-year time frame will be returned to the State Conservationist. Application revisions and updates are encouraged and may be submitted at any time. Applicants will be notified when the Secretary designates new areas and they will be offered an opportunity to update their submission before it is formally evaluated.

### **e Support of Designation**

Proof of State or Tribal Nation support for the designation shall be provided by the appropriate official.

## 513.12 Application Format and Content

### a Specific RC&D Activities

The application must be specific in what the organized RC&D Council plans. It is important the Council be aware of the activities of other organizations and consider how their priorities can link and/or add value to others (regional or State economic development plans, tourism plans, etc.). The Council needs to define its own role and priorities. All projects adopted, in progress, or completed shall be listed in the RC&D Information and Management Database quarterly by the appropriate NRCS employee.

### b Application Length

The application must not be more than 25 pages long.

### c Opening Pages

The following table describes the content and order of the opening pages of the application.

Part	Contents
Cover/Title Page	One page only; see Section <a href="#">513.50</a> , Exhibit A.
Transmittal Page	One page only; see Section <a href="#">513.50</a> , Exhibit A.
Preface	(One page only; one to two paragraphs at most). A brief statement by the applicant area on goals and the expectations of the role of the RC&D Program in achieving these goals.

<b>Part</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Summary Page	<p>(One page only), see Section <a href="#">513.50</a>, exhibit A, for an example. This page should be forwarded by NRCS to the Secretary of Agriculture as part of the application. The following information must be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tribal reservations—List all tribal lands included in the RC&amp;D application Area.</li> <li>• Counties—List all counties, parishes, or boroughs in the RC&amp;D applicant Area. Also include the total number of acres in the Area.</li> <li>• Sponsors—List all sponsors.</li> <li>• Supporting Organizations—List any organizations (that are not Council sponsors) who support the RC&amp;D application for designation.</li> <li>• Summary Description of the Council Area—This covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location in the State</li> <li>• Population (rural plus urban)</li> <li>• Population center</li> <li>• Dominant agriculture and industrial centers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Council Primary Contact – Name, title, address, and telephone and fax numbers</li> <li>• U.S. Congressional Delegation - U.S. Senators and Representatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Party-State designation</li> <li>• Congressional District (Number)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### **d Body of the Application**

The following table describes the content and order of the body of the application.

<b>Part</b>	<b>Suggested Content</b>
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<b>Part</b>	<b>Suggested Content</b>
Council Name	<p>The proposed name should reflect the counties composing the Area and unique enough to avoid confusion with other local organizations. Proposed RC&amp;D Area and RC&amp;D Council name must meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed name must be used to identify the RC&amp;D Council and the geographic area represented. The Council name must be the same as the designated RC&amp;D Area name.</li> <li>• Proposed names must be unique; they must not duplicate any designated RC&amp;D Area name or local organization without the written endorsement of the RC&amp;D Area or local organization. NHQ staff can help ensure that duplication does not occur.</li> </ul>
General Description of the Area	<p>The beginning of this section of the application should be only three or four paragraphs and include general information about the Area. This would include the number and names of the counties, parishes or boroughs in the Area, a brief geophysical description, and information about the population centers in the Area.</p>
Socio-Economic Information for the Area	<p>This should be two to three paragraphs with more detail on the demographic characteristics of the Area (population, median household income, unemployment, poverty rate, major employment categories, etc.) and any other relevant information.</p>
Map of the Area	<p>Provide a map showing the general location of the Area within the State and a visual concept of the area boundaries.</p>



Part	Suggested Content
Area Plan — Resource Conservation and Utilization Plan	<p>The term RC&amp;D Council's "area plan" means a resource conservation and use plan developed through a planning process by a council for a designated area of one or more States, or of land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe. A more complete description can be found in Section <a href="#">513.22</a>. NRCS policy is the Area Plan must address each of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land conservation element</li> <li>• Water management element</li> <li>• Community development element</li> <li>• Land management element</li> </ul> <p>This may include, but not be limited to, the control of erosion and sedimentation; the conservation, use, and quality of water, including irrigation and rural water supplies; the mitigation of floods and high water tables; the repair and improvement of reservoirs; the improvement of agricultural water management; the improvement of water quality; the development of resources-based industries; the protection of rural industries from natural resource hazards; the development of adequate rural water and waste disposal systems; the improvement of recreation facilities; the improvement in the quality of rural housing; the provision of adequate health and education facilities; the satisfaction of essential transportation and communication needs; the promotion of food security, economic development, and education; energy conservation, including the production of energy crops; the protection of agricultural land, as appropriate, from conversion to other uses; farmland protection; and the protection of fish and wildlife habitats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area plan section should be no more than four to five pages.</li> </ul>
Purpose for Creation – Mission and Vision	<p>This section should be brief and concise (no more than four to five pages) and describe the Council's mission and vision for the Area. The Council may wish to incorporate the above elements in its vision and mission.</p>
Council Goals and Objectives	<p>This section should be no more than two to three pages. This section should be clear as to how the RC&amp;D Council's goals and objectives address the issues, concerns and resource opportunities outlined in the above section. Include a description of how the Council decided upon these goals and objectives and public involvement in the process.</p>

<b>Part</b>	<b>Suggested Content</b>
Community Planning and Organization	This section, including the subsections listed below, should be no more than two to three pages. This section documents information about the structure and organization of the RC&D Council.
Organized RC&D or Community Group	This includes historical information on the formation of the RC&D steering committee and the formation of the Council. Clearly state the role of the RC&D Council, its operation, purpose, and staffing. Describe how the Council establishes priorities and actions that address its goals and objectives. Describe how the Council incorporated issues of underrepresented and underserved population in the proposed RC&D Area, along with how it is going to assure these populations access to the decisionmaking process of the Council.
Sponsors	List all sponsoring organizations. Council sponsors should reflect a cross section of interest and community composition.
Board of Directors	List members of the Board of Directors and who they represent.
Activity Under Way That Implements the Goals in the Area Plan	Give a brief description (one or two paragraphs) of any activity the Council is undertaking to achieve the goals listed in the Area Plan.
Levels of Support	Give information describing the levels of support of Regional and State USDA Offices in support of the creation of an RC&D Area.
Community Representativeness	This section should be very brief and include information on how the strategic plan or Area Plan was developed through community-wide participation (number of communities, public meetings, outreach to include those that have historically been underserved, etc.) and how the planned actions of the RC&D will serve these communities.
Required Clauses	See Section <a href="#">513.50</a> , exhibit A, for the required clauses required in the application.

<b>Part</b>	<b>Suggested Content</b>
RC&D Applicant Area Activity Report	<p>This section should be no longer than two pages and include the following:</p> <p>Council Activities During the Past Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many Council meetings were held?</li> <li>• How many executive committee meetings were held?</li> <li>• How many resource committees have been formed?</li> <li>• Did the resource committees hold any meetings? If so, how many meetings were held?</li> </ul> <p>Project Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many projects are recorded in your RC&amp;D database?</li> <li>• How many projects were adopted during the past fiscal year?</li> <li>• How many projects were completed during the past fiscal year?</li> <li>• What was the Council's role in each of these projects?</li> </ul> <p>Interagency Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were other agencies involved in preparing the Area Plan?</li> <li>• How many State and Federal agencies other than NRCS?</li> <li>• What other (but not in the database) activities were agencies involved in with the Council in the past fiscal year?</li> </ul>

Part	Suggested Content
Activity Report	<p>Incorporation Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the Council incorporated?</li> <li>• If not, is an application being prepared?</li> <li>• Has an application been submitted?</li> <li>• Is this status pending?</li> </ul> <p>Nonprofit Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the Council have nonprofit status under the IRS code? (See 513.02e.)</li> <li>• If not, is an application being prepared?</li> <li>• Has an application been submitted?</li> <li>• Is this status pending</li> </ul>
Signatory Pages	<p>“We, the undersigned sponsoring local organizations, offer the above information in support of our request for designation of RC&amp;D Program assistance. This application represents a true picture of the conditions in our area. Further, we agree to support this area and Council if designated and to participate in all its undertakings. Witness the signatures of the undersigned on the dates shown below.” (Type or print all information except the signatures.)</p> <p>This action authorized at an official meeting of (Name of Public Body)</p> <p>By: _____ Title: _____, on _____20__at:</p> <p>Address: _____, City: _____, State: _____</p> <p>Attest: _____ Title: Secretary Date: _____</p> <p>NOTE: Add additional signature blocks as necessary to include all sponsors.</p>

#### **e Attachments to the Application**

An Annual Plan of Work must be attached. If a more comprehensive Area Plan has been developed, it may be submitted as an attachment. No other attachments are allowed.

#### **f Letters of Support**

Letter of support from organizations and individuals to the Secretary of Agriculture must not be included with the application. Letters in support should be sent directly to the Secretary of Agriculture.

#### **g Distribution of the Application**

Applications are sent to the Secretary through the State Conservationist and Chief as follows:

- Sponsors send one original signed and two copies to the State Conservationist.
- The State Conservationist retains one copy, transmits one copy to the Regional Conservationist, and sends the one original signed copy and a transmittal letter to:  
Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Attention Director, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division
- The State Conservationist's letter should recommend approval and contain a statement that the problems were identified through a public participation process.
- The original signed copy of the application is kept on file by the Director, RC&CD Division, for a period not to exceed five years.

#### **h Notification of Action on the Application**

Notification is made by NRCS when the Secretary designates new RC&D Areas as follows:

- The Chief will notify members of Congress, USDA agencies, and top leadership of the Secretary's action.
- The Deputy Chief for Programs will notify the State Conservationist and the Regional Conservationist.
- The State Conservationist will notify the RC&D Council, Governor, local USDA Offices, State agencies, and others as appropriate. The State Conservationist will also notify the Councils that were not selected.

## **513.13 Constitution and Bylaws**

### **a General**

The RC&D steering committee is expected to prepare a constitution or articles of incorporation and bylaws by which the RC&D Council shall operate. These documents should cover all necessary functions of the Council and how they will be carried out. When the constitution or articles of incorporation and bylaws are adopted, a Council is officially formed and the steering committee ceases to exist. The RC&D steering committee should contact the appropriate State agencies for applicable State regulations.

### **b Constitution or Articles of Incorporation**

The constitution or articles of incorporation is the document that officially states the purpose of the RC&D Area and gives the legal organizational structure. Together with the bylaws, it provides the method by which the Council operates. The Council is required to incorporate as a nonprofit entity.

### **c Annual Review**

These documents are important to the orderly conduct of business and must be kept up to date. It is recommended that they be reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect the way business is being transacted.

## **513.14 Nonprofit Status**

### **a Reason for Nonprofit Status**

In order for the Secretary to provide assistance to the designated area, the Council, as the governing organization, must be incorporated as nonprofit as required by Public Law 107–171.

### **b Information Sources for State and Federal Requirements**

Information on your State requirements of nonprofit organizations should be sought from appropriate State agencies or boards. Information of the Federal Internal Revenue Service requirements can be obtained from your regional IRS office or on the national IRS Web Site:

[http://www.irs.gov/prod/bus\\_info/tax\\_pro/irm-part/section/36070c.html](http://www.irs.gov/prod/bus_info/tax_pro/irm-part/section/36070c.html)

## **513.15 Roles and Responsibility of RC&D Councils**

### **a General**

The RC&D Councils are responsible for directing the work of the Council.

### **b Responsibilities**

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- Developing an Area or Strategic Long-Range Plan and working toward achieving the stated goals and objectives.
- Providing opportunities for the public to participate in establishing Council goals and objectives.
- Setting priorities and implementing them through an Annual Plan of Work.
- Supporting and/or establishing committees, resource teams, or task forces to accomplish work identified in the Annual Plan of Work.
- Coordinating planning and implementation activities with regional agencies and related groups having similar resource concerns in the Area.
- Carrying out an effective information and education program that informs the public of the Council's goals and objectives, and of the projects that have been undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's Strategic Plan, Plan implementation, and utilization of resources.
- Meeting all relevant laws and requirements for nonprofit organizations.
- Determining the organization's mission and purposes.
- Ensuring effective organizational planning by developing and adopting Strategic Short- and Long- Term Plans, and organizational policies and structures.
- Ensuring that Council members remain actively committed and reflect the organizations and communities they represent.
- Managing the financial resources of the organization by adopting fiscal policies and procedures.
- Providing leadership to ensure that issues and concerns identified and prioritized in the planning process are being addressed by the Council.
- Directing and monitoring the organization's programs and services.
- Establishing and participating in developing policies and procedures for the organization that may include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Personnel policies
  - Code of ethics and conflicts of interest policies
  - Fund management and internal control procedures
  - Employee evaluations
  - Council evaluation process.
- Making employment decisions including performance and termination of employees.
- Participating in a national program evaluation conducted by USDA to be reported to Congress not later than June 30, 2005.



## **Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart C Program Planning**

#### **513.20 General**

#### **513.21 Program Planning Responsibilities**

#### **513.22 RC&D Area Plan**

#### **513.23 Area Plan Contents**

#### **513.24 Review, Approval, and Distribution**

#### **513.25 The Annual Plan of Work**

#### **513.26 Project Plans**

#### **513.28 Project Purposes Eligible for RC&D Technical and Financial Assistance**

## **Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart C Program Planning**

#### **513.20 General**

##### **a Program Premise**

The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program is based on the premise that local people, working together, can identify and solve problems and realize opportunities that will enhance the quality of life in their area. Plans are designed to direct Federal, State, and local resources toward accomplishing the purpose and intent of the RC&D Program.

##### **b Program Operation**

RC&D operates at local, State, regional, and national levels to accomplish the program elements of land conservation, water management, community development, and other elements, including conserving energy, protecting agricultural and forest lands, and protecting fish and wildlife habitats. Responsible program implementation requires that all functional levels of the RC&D Program develop plans to direct resources where program purposes will be accomplished in each of the designated RC&D Areas.

Public Law 107–171 defines the term “planning process” as the continuous effort by the designated RC&D Council to develop and carry out effective resource conservation and utilization plans for a designated area, including the development of an area plan, goals, objectives, policies, implementation activities, evaluations and reviews, and the opportunity for public participation in such efforts. All RC&D Program planning should use a comprehensive planning approach (such as the process described in the NRCS National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH)) or other relevant processes.

## **513.21 Program Planning Responsibilities**

### **a Chief of NRCS**

The Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service delegates national RC&D Program planning responsibilities to the Division Director, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division, through the Deputy Chief for Programs. Long-range program planning will be accomplished in consultation with the USDA RC&D Working Group and approved by the USDA RC&D Policy Advisory Board (PAB), of which the Chief is a member. Annual RC&D Program planning will be accomplished through the same procedures, and all activities will directly support long-term national Program objectives.

### **b Director, RC&CD Division**

The RC&CD Division Director may provide technical assistance for planning to the Board of Directors of the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils. Staff support authorized for such planning will be utilized to develop national strategic and annual plans of work to encourage and improve the ability of State and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development.

### **c Regional Conservationist**

Regional Conservationists are to implement RC&D Program planning in compliance with agency policy. Regional offices of the USDA RC&D Policy Advisory Board (PAB) agencies are encouraged to participate in developing the strategic plan and Annual Plan of Work.

Regional Conservationists may provide NRCS technical planning assistance to the Board of Directors of regional associations of RC&D Councils within their regions. NRCS staff support authorized for such planning will be utilized to develop regional strategic plans and annual plans of work to encourage and improve the capability of States and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development.

### **d State Conservationist**

State Conservationists are to implement RC&D Program planning in compliance with established planning procedures. State Conservationists will ensure that local RC&D Councils are working from a current Area Plan and Annual Plan of Work. NRCS policy requires the RC&D Council's "area plan" address the following: land conservation, water management, community development, and land management.

These may include, but not be limited to, the control of erosion and sedimentation; the conservation, use, and quality of water, including irrigation and rural water supplies; the mitigation of floods and high water tables; the repair and improvement of reservoirs; the improvement of agricultural water management; the improvement of water quality; the development of resources-based industries; the protection of rural industries from natural resource hazards; the development of adequate rural water and waste disposal systems; the

improvement of recreation facilities; the improvement in the quality of rural housing; the provision of adequate health and education facilities; the satisfaction of essential transportation and communication needs; the promotion of food security, economic development, and education; energy conservation, including the production of energy crops; the protection of agricultural land, as appropriate, from conversion to other uses; farmland protection; and the protection of fish and wildlife habitats.

**e RC&D PAB**

State officials of the RC&D PAB agencies are encouraged to work with NRCS and the local RC&D Councils to develop and implement strategic and Annual Plans of Work.

**f State RC&D Association Board of Directors**

State Conservationists should provide technical assistance to the Board of Directors of State RC&D associations where they exist. Written agreement regarding the scope of work between NRCS and the State association is encouraged.

## **513.22 RC&D Area Plan**

### **a General**

Planning and implementation are the central functions of an RC&D. Area planning can improve the organization's ability to capitalize on changing conditions, improve overall productivity, and make better strategic decisions that result in the implementation of a more efficient and effective program in an RC&D Area. A well developed Area Plan provides a basis and direction for the RC&D Council to serve the area to the best of its ability. The Area Plan is open ended and dynamic, and it outlines the tasks the Council wants to accomplish. It identifies needs and opportunities, as well as broad and specific objectives to reach each goal.

### **b Requirements**

Each RC&D Council will maintain a current (revised at least every five years) Area Plan as a basis for assistance under Public Law 107–171. NRCS policy requires the plan contain the elements specified in paragraph [513.21\(d\)](#).

### **c Area Planning Process**

The Area Plan should be developed by the local people to ensure that the problems, concerns, and opportunities are consistent with the development needs of the RC&D Area. Public Law 107- defines the term “planning process” as the continuous effort by the designated RC&D Council to develop and carry out effective resource conservation and utilization plans for a designated area, including the development of an area plan, goals, objectives, policies, implementation activities, evaluations and reviews, and the opportunity for public participation in such efforts.

A public involvement strategy needs to be developed for broad-based public participation. The Council should maintain thorough documentation of public involvement. The system used to accomplish this objective should be determined and facilitated by the Council.

A coordinated planning effort needs to be made with other regional planning organizations, Rural Development Networks, State and Federal Rural Development Agencies, etc., to ensure concurrence from them and the State governor. This coordination effort should result in additional support of State assistance to Councils and implementation of the Area Plan.

### **d Knowledge Required**

Planning requires that a Council have a clearly defined mission and purpose. It also is important for a Council to have a vision of what its area should be like in the future and who is working on this vision.

### **e Coordination Required**

A high degree of coordination with diverse interests can ensure a better understanding of problems and opportunities within an RC&D Area and, therefore, more successful planning. This

entails involving the public agencies and others who may have expertise, knowledge, or legal authorities that could assist the Council.

#### **f Concurrence and Approval Needs**

The RC&D Area Plan is approved by the RC&D Council and with concurrence from the NRCS State Conservationist. It represents an agreement between the State Conservationist and the Council as to what direction the Council will go. By concurring in the Area Plan, the State Conservationist agrees to provide assistance within available funding to the Council to implement projects and activities to meet the goals and objectives contained therein and to seek the mutual support of other relevant USDA agencies.

#### **g Required Reviews**

Every three years, the RC&D Council should review the Area Plan to ensure that it continues to reflect the problems and concerns of the people living in the Area. If the Council determines that all or part of an Area Plan is out of date, the Area Plan, or appropriate part, must be revised. A revised Area Plan must be completed at least every five years.

## **513.23 Area Plan Contents**

### **a General**

The Area Plan must focus on improving the quality of life in the Area. It should be a concise, accurate, and useful focal point that galvanizes the Council into productive leadership. The RC&D Area Plan need not contain extensive resource information or lists of proposed projects.

### **b Needs and Opportunities**

Needs and opportunities should be defined well enough to show the extent of impact on the community. Needs are “undesirable conditions with some type of damage occurring;” opportunities are “chances to improve an existing condition.” Only the needs and opportunities that the Council chooses to address should be described in detail; others may be acknowledged, if desired.

### **c Minimum Plan Requirements**

The RC&D Area Plan, at a minimum, must contain the following:

- Mission and vision
- Needs and opportunities
- Goals and objectives
- Strategies for addressing needs, including current and potential partnerships with USDA and others
- Time frame to accomplish the above

### **d Requirements for the Area Plan Signature Page**

The following table shows compliance statements that must be included on the signature page of all Area Plans. Paragraphs 1 and 2 are required by law; paragraph 3 and the signature block are required by NRCS policy.

Signature Requirement	Compliance Statement
Paragraph 1	"The <i>(Name)</i> RC&D Council agrees that the RC&D Program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100–259) and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7CFR–15, Subparts A and B) that provide that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap/disability be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial (or technical) assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof."
Paragraph 2	The <i>(Name)</i> RC&D Council agrees that the signing of this document constitutes agreement to comply with Federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free workplace, and responsibilities for nonprocurement, suspension, and debarment, and State review.
Paragraph 3	The <i>(Name)</i> RC&D Council hereby adopts this RC&D Area Plan and agrees to use effectively the assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to realize the goals and objectives outlined herein.
Signature Block 1	<p>(Name) _____ RC&amp;D Council, (State)</p> <p>By: _____ Date: _____ Chairperson</p> <p>Attest: _____ Council Secretary</p>
Signature Block 2	<p>This action authorized at an official meeting of the _____ <i>(Name)</i> RC&amp;D Council on _____ <i>(Date)</i></p> <p>U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service</p> <p>The State Conservationist hereby acknowledges the attached Area Plan of _____ as meeting the requirements under Public Law 97–98 to receive assistance from USDA.</p> <p>Acknowledged By: _____ Date: _____ State Conservationist</p>



## **513.24 Review, Approval, and Distribution**

### **a Area Plan Review**

Prior to final adoption of the Area Plan, the Council shall provide a final draft to the State Conservationist for review. This should ensure effective coordination between the Council and the NRCS State Office.

### **b Area Plan Approval**

Upon completion of the review process and resolution of all comments, the RC&D Council adopts and signs the RC&D Area Plan. The plan is then forwarded to the NRCS State Conservationist for concurrence. Before approving the final plan, the State Conservationist must be assured that it complies with applicable administrative policy and RC&D Program requirements. The Area Plan represents the agreement between the Council of the designated RC&D Area and NRCS for the use of public funds to support the Area.

### **c Area Plan Distribution**

The final RC&D Area Plan adopted by the RC&D Council and approved by the NRCS State Conservationist should be distributed to all members and others who participated in its development. Copies must be sent to the State Conservationist, who will forward them to the National and Regional Offices and to other USDA agency heads for that State.

### **d Endorsement Letter**

An endorsement letter from the governor should be sought. If obtained, it should be attached to the Area Plan. The RC&D Council should be keeping the Governor's Office informed of its activities throughout the planning process.

### **e Modifying RC&D Area Plans**

RC&D Councils are responsible for preparing revisions when major changes in the Area Plan are necessary, such as adding or deleting goals from the plan or changes in Area boundaries. In most cases, the entire plan should be reprinted and distributed to all interested parties. Procedures for developing, approving, and distributing revisions should be the same as those for initial plan development. Area Plans should be updated as often as necessary, and at a minimum must be revised every 5 years, to reflect changing conditions of the Area, and to serve as a basis for targeting agency and Council resources to the highest priority needs. Councils also are responsible for revising their Area Plan within 18 months following a significant expansion or other change of an existing Area.

### **f Newly Designated RC&D Areas**

The RC&D Council's application may serve as its preliminary Area Plan. The preliminary plan may be used for up to three years following designation. During this time, the Council is responsible for developing an in-depth Area Plan. It is the RC&D Council's responsibility to

ensure adequate opportunity for public participation by interested individuals, organizations, special purpose groups, and government agencies.

## **513.25 The Annual Plan of Work**

### **a General**

The Annual Plan of Work, which is the operational and management tool for the Area Plan, directs an annual schedule of work toward projects that address objectives outlined in the Area Plan. The Plan of Work should be presented at the annual meeting of the Council.

### **b Dynamic Document**

Councils should focus their resources on implementing projects that support the goals and objectives of the Area Plan. New projects may emerge that require reconsideration of the objectives outlined in the Annual Plan of Work.

### **c Time Frames for the Annual Plan of Work**

Many Councils elect to schedule a longer time frame for the plan, up to three years. However, the plan should be updated annually, presented at the annual meeting of the Council, and progress recorded as it occurs. The plan is an outline of the highest priority projects and activities that can be accomplished in the immediate future. It should be aggressive but also realistic to ensure balance between goals and available resources.

### **d Coordinator's Schedule of Expectations**

Since the Coordinator's job is to assist the Council, the plan prepared by the Council shall serve as the Coordinator's primary work plan, as appropriate given Federal ethics rules, EEO, and civil rights requirements. On occasion, RC&D Coordinators may have a limited number of NRCS assignments, or, in the case of other USDA agency-provided coordinators, that are not directly related to the Council's work priorities involving RC&D projects and activities. RC&D Coordinators are encouraged to incorporate such time and activities into a short-term plan so that it reflects realistic expectations of the Council and the Coordinator. The State Conservationist should work with the Council when assigning other NRCS duties to Coordinators.

### **e Annual Agreement for Assistance**

The Annual Plan of Work serves as the formal agreement that supports NRCS annual funding for the RC&D staffing and office support for the year. The plan may be adopted at the beginning of the NRCS fiscal year, the beginning of a calendar year, or the beginning of the Council's business year. The adoption dates should be by mutual agreement between the RC&D Council and the NRCS State Conservationist. Any major changes in the plan during the year should be agreed upon by the NRCS State Conservationist.

### **f EEO Statement Requirements**

The Equal Opportunity Statement must be in all documents, including plans of work: "All programs and assistance of the RC&D Council are available without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital

or family status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

#### **g Distribution**

The RC&D Council Chair and the State Conservationist sign the plan. The Annual Plan of Work serves as the NRCS acknowledgment that the Council is meeting the requirements under Public Law 107-171. Copies should be provided to Council members; assisting agencies; NRCS National Headquarters, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division; and others as appropriate.

#### **h Plan Retention**

Plans should be kept for one year following the year(s) they cover.

#### **i Implementation**

The State Conservationist, RC&D Council, and project sponsors have responsibilities regarding implementation of an Area's Annual Plan of Work, as follows:

Person/Group Responsible	Implementation Responsibilities
State Conservationist	<p>For projects fully funded or partially funded by NRCS, the State Conservationist is responsible for ensuring that the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses an objective in the Council's Area Plan</li> <li>• Is adequately planned</li> <li>• Complies with RC&amp;D and governmental policies</li> <li>• Is implemented as stated in the grant application</li> <li>• Meets NRCS technical standards.</li> </ul> <p>When NRCS design assistance is provided, the State Conservationist is responsible for all plans and specifications prepared as well as any Oversight &amp; Management (O&amp;M) plans required by the National O&amp;M Manual (180–V—NO&amp;MM).</p> <p>The State Conservationist is also responsible for establishing a system for allocating any funds available for project implementation after covering all operating expenses.</p>
RC&D Council	<p>The RC&amp;D Council sets priorities, carries out the planning process (including public participation) for all projects, ensures that all local and State requirements are met, adopts and approves project plans, and monitors accomplishments.</p>
Project Sponsors	<p>Project sponsors are responsible for completing the proposed project as well as operating and maintaining the completed project. Sponsors should carry out a project as specified in the plan. The sponsor may seek assistance from the Council if needed. Since enabling legislation for the RC&amp;D Program prohibits the use of RC&amp;D Federal funds to purchase land rights, the sponsors must assume this responsibility when land rights are needed. The RC&amp;D Council may also be the main sponsor of projects.</p>

## **513.26 Project Plans**

### **a RC&D Project**

An RC&D project, (no longer called an “RC&D measure”), is the primary tool for implementing a Council’s Area Plan and Annual Plan of Work to achieve goals and objectives. Projects are identified in the Council’s current Annual Plan of Work.

To adopt or accept projects, Councils should have a formal mechanism that is fully understood by the Council’s membership and is documented for public purposes. The Council decides the length or duration of a project and reports accomplishments in an annual report to the membership. A copy of this report should be provided to NRCS and other participating USDA agencies.

### **b Project Definition**

A project is a term used by NRCS to track the accomplishments of the Council. The Council is requested to use this term when referring to work that requires a significant level of resources. A project is a major effort undertaken by an RC&D Council designated to help reach a specific goal and results in a defined objective, result, or service that provides public benefits. Projects have a distinct cycle of planning, implementation, and results. Council activities may be many in any given year and may not lead to a measurable project. Projects and activities should be tracked on an annually. Councils are encouraged to work with the Coordinator to ensure that project data is recorded in the RC&D Information and Management System (RC&D database).

### **c Implementation Assistance**

RC&D projects can be implemented using technical and/or financial assistance funds from a single source or from a variety of sources. Financial assistance funds must be obligated and tracked by the Council to ensure fund integrity and accountability. The Council should develop systems for accounting and tracking project funds. Requirements regarding reporting the use of funds will vary with each funding source.

### **d Planning Process**

Each project adopted by the Council must follow a systematic planning process to ensure the success of the project. The amount and intensity of the planning effort will depend on the complexity of the project itself.

Planning considerations and the planning process are basically the same regardless of the funding source. It is important that Councils carry out an effective planning process on each project adopted so that all important factors and implications are considered.

Some groups offering funding have unique requirements, and it is important to understand and meet the special requirements for that particular source of funds.

**e Compliance with Federal and State Laws**

Although the majority of the funding for projects will come from sources other than the federally allocated RC&D Program funds, NRCS and the Council are responsible for ensuring that USDA funded projects comply with all applicable Federal and State laws.

## 513.28 Project Purposes Eligible for RC&D Technical and Financial Assistance

### a General

The RC&D Program helps to develop and implement project plans. Project plans are integrated into the broader Area Plan. Cost-sharing available from the RC&D Program is considered as "seed money" to help the Council attract funds from other sources. All projects must produce public benefits.

### b Project Purposes — Elements

RC&D financial assistance may be used for the purpose(s) defined under Section        of Public Law 107–171:

- Land conservation elements
- Water management elements
- Community development elements
- Land management elements

Each element (purpose) is defined by criteria outlined in the following table.

Element	Criteria
Land Conservation	" The purpose of which is to control erosion and sedimentation."
Water Management	" Provides one or more clear environmental or conservation benefits, the purpose of which is to provide for the conservation, use, and quality of water, including irrigation and rural water supplies; the mitigation of floods and high water tables; the repair and improvement of reservoirs; the improvement of agricultural water management; and the improvement of water quality."
Community Development	"The purpose of which is to improve the development of resources-based industries; the protection of rural industries from natural resource hazards; the development of adequate rural water and waste disposal systems; the improvement of recreation facilities; the improvement in the quality of rural housing; the provision of adequate health and education facilities; the satisfaction of essential transportation and communication needs; and the promotion of food security, economic development, and education."
Land Management	"The purpose of which is energy conservation, including the production of energy crops; the protection of agricultural land, as appropriate, from conversion to other uses; farmland protection; and the protection of fish and wildlife habitats."



**c Technical Assistance Costs**

These costs are borne by NRCS through employee salaries and benefits. The State Conservationist makes the final decision as to how NRCS technical assistance funds will be spent. Other agencies may provide technical assistance to Councils.

**d Financial Assistance Costs**

NRCS may provide funds directly to RC&D Councils or associations of RC&D Councils through grants, cooperative agreements, project agreements, and interagency agreements that directly implement RC&D Area Plans. NRCS may also join with other Federal agencies through interagency agreements and other arrangements as needed to carry out the RC&D program purpose. Funds may be used for such purposes as technical assistance from other NRCS staff, planning, analysis, feasibility studies, business plans, training and education, or other activities needed for project implementation.

**e Financial Assistance Costs for Construction Projects**

When financial assistance funds are available, cost-sharing for projects involving construction may be available from NRCS RC&D Program appropriations at a rate not to exceed 25 percent (up to a maximum of \$50,000) of the total cost of the project. This must be matched by a local sponsor's cash contribution and/or in-kind services amounting to at least 10 percent of the total cost of the project.

Any source of funds may be used to pay for the remainder of the cost as long as the funding source allows the funds to be used as a match against other Federal funds (such as RC&D funds). It is intended that when RC&D Program funds are available as financial assistance, the funds be "seed money" to attract other funds to implement a project rather than to pay for the project itself.

**f Special Cost-sharing Assistance**

Special cost-sharing for special appropriations will be established based on the intent of the special appropriation. When these funds are made available, the Chief will determine the applicable cost-share rate.

**g Cost-share Rates in Project Plans**

Project plans signed before January 1, 1992, will be cost-shared at the original rate specified in the project plan. Applications funded after January 1, 1992, will be cost-shared at a rate based upon the requirements as shown in paragraphs 513.28(d–f).

## **Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart D Tribal Nations and Outside Groups**

#### **[513.30 Tribal Nations and the RC&D Program](#)**

#### **[513.31 Outside Groups](#)**

## **Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart D Tribal Nations and Outside Groups**

#### **513.30 Tribal Nations and the RC&D Program**

##### **a Tribal Nations as an RC&D Council**

Tribes may apply directly to the Secretary of Agriculture for designation as an RC&D Area. If an approved RC&D Council does not exist in the area where a tribal nation expresses a need, the State Conservationist shall provide assistance to the nation in becoming a designated Council.

##### **b Tribal Nations and Existing RC&D Councils**

Tribal nations are encouraged to join an existing RC&D Council in their geographic area.

## **513.31 Outside Groups**

### **a. Assistance to Applicant Areas**

Applicant Area Councils may receive training and materials through the RC&D Program if the groups that have unified in the multi-jurisdictional areas —

- Embrace the principles of the RC&D Program.
- Utilize the RC&D concept as set forth in this manual as a basis for operating.
- Have an assigned employee from NRCS or a participating USDA agency to provide technical assistance.

NRCS will make spaces available for these employees in all training sessions, workshops, and other activities that improve the employee's ability to function effectively.

## **Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart E Operations Management**

#### **513.40 General Policy and Civil Rights**

#### **513.41 Program and Fund Accountability**

#### **513.42 Annual Report – Documentation of the Annual Report**

#### **513.43 RC&D Information and Management System**

#### **513.44 Handling RC&D Council/Committee Funds and Financial Records**

#### **513.45 Program Evaluation at the State Level**

#### **513.46 RC&D Area Name Change**

#### **513.47 RC&D Area Changes**

#### **513.48 Other Administrative Issues**

## Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)

### Subpart E Operations Management

#### 513.40 General Policy and Civil Rights

##### a RC&D Operations Management

Operations management for the RC&D Program follows policy and procedures described in the NRCS General Manual . This manual identifies the minimum administrative requirements and procedures in order to manage the RC&D Program at the local, State, and National levels. Management of the RC&D Program involves procedures where the agency and RC&D Council are coordinated in order to accomplish the objectives of the RC&D Program-enabling legislation and each RC&D Council's Area Plan.

##### b Civil Rights (CR) Program Responsibilities

As a Federally funded program by USDA through NRCS, Coordinators, and Councils have specific responsibilities to ensure that they comply with Federal nondiscrimination laws and acts and document compliance.

##### c Council CR Responsibilities

The information in the following table will help Councils meet the intent of Civil Rights laws and acts.

Action	Description
Outreach Activities	Area Plans will include proposed outreach activities (based upon the Area's outreach plan) and include the USDA nondiscrimination statement.
Public Meetings	Council meetings must be open to the public with advance announcements requesting that people with disabilities notify the Council that they will attend and will require specific assistance. Councils must provide the assistance to disabled members of the public upon request.
Meeting Facilities	Council meeting facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities.
Nondiscrimination Statement	Councils must use the USDA nondiscrimination statement on all public documents they produce: publications, news articles, newsletters, posters, annual reports, fact sheets, computer Home Page, job vacancy announcements, etc.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>
Participation on Councils	Councils should have an aggressive non-discriminatory outreach program to encourage eligible women and minorities to become Council members or to participate on Councils. The Council should document the process used.
Signed Agreement	A Council should have on file a copy of a signed agreement between NRCS and the RC&D Council stating that the RC&D Program will be run in a nondiscriminatory manner.

#### **d Coordinators' Responsibilities**

The information in the following table will help Coordinators meet the intent of Civil Rights laws and acts.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>
Civil Rights Training	Coordinators need to be current with all applicable NRCS Civil Rights training.
Meeting Attendance and Protected Group Exclusion	Coordinators may not attend meetings or activities in official capacities that exclude women, minorities, youth, elderly, individuals of different religious beliefs, or persons with disabilities.
Awareness Training	Coordinators will provide the RC&D Council with training in the mutual Civil Rights responsibilities of NRCS and the Council. The training shall be documented in the official minutes of the Council meeting at which this training is provided.
Positive Notification on EEO Policies	Coordinators will provide positive and continual notification of equal opportunity policy to the public about the RC&D Program and document their efforts.
Outreach Documentation	Coordinators will document their outreach efforts to accomplish the Area outreach plan.
Civil Rights Success Stories	Coordinators will submit Civil Rights success stories to news outlets and document their efforts.
Develop Eligible Beneficiary Data	Coordinators are responsible for developing potential eligible beneficiary data on race, national origin, and gender in their Area and document the results.
Environmental Justice	Coordinators must comply with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. Coordinators ensure the "And Justice for All" poster is prominently displayed in their office. Use bilingual poster if appropriate.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>
Program Participation Success Stories	Coordinators will document their success in program participation based upon eligible beneficiary data obtained.
Civil Rights Documentation	Coordinators are responsible for documenting Civil Rights data in the RC&D database by the required due dates. Coordinators keep current Civil Rights data and USDA Civil Rights information in the Civil Rights file 230.15.
Encourage Diversity on Councils	Coordinators will advise Councils on the optimum makeup of their particular Council based upon area race, sex, and national origin data, documenting their efforts and results.
Civil Rights Responsibility Reviews	Coordinators review the Civil Rights responsibilities of the federally funded RC&D Program with the Council annually and document the process.



## **513.41 Program and Fund Accountability**

### **a Funds**

The funds that Congress makes available to implement the RC&D Program must be expended solely for the purpose for which they were appropriated. State Conservationists and Program Managers are responsible for seeing that the funds are used in accordance with the purpose and intent of Congress. States are annually allocated RC&D funds to produce predetermined work products. The Area Plan and Annual Plan of Work are the primary tools utilized by RC&Ds and Program Managers to identify those work products.

### **b Accountability**

Accountability is demonstrated by successfully fulfilling objectives outlined in the work plans. Annual reports and the RC&D Information and Management System are the primary tools used by RC&D Councils and Program Managers to demonstrate that funds were utilized as intended. State and National Program Managers are responsible for communicating progress to State Conservationists, the NRCS Chief, the Department of Agriculture, and Congress.

## **513.42 Annual Report – Documentation of the Annual Report**

### **a General**

The Annual Plan of Work, which identifies all significant RC&D projects and activities planned for implementation, should be updated regularly to show progress of the implementation. The RC&D Coordinator should review progress regularly with the RC&D Council and NRCS supervisor to communicate the implementation status.

### **b Annual Report Requirements**

The Annual Report must be provided to the State Program Manager each year. The Annual Plan of Work with its documented progress is used to prepare the Annual Report. The State Program Manager will determine if progress was accomplished as planned. Coordinators must keep Program Managers apprised of their progress and communicate clearly difficulties or changes that may result in an inability to accomplish short-term goals. Supervisors and Program Managers must take immediate action to help identify resources and assist with problem solving during the year as any progress deficiencies become known.

### **c Highlights and Special Reports**

As nonprofit entities, many Councils develop annual reports to share with funding sources, partners, and other decisionmakers. Highlights and special reports are effective tools for sharing successes and can be used to educate funders, partners, and other decisionmakers such as Congress. The National and Regional Associations also appreciate copies of these materials. The National Program Manager and National Association of RC&D Councils annually request a report of highlights from all RC&D in preparation for congressional visits in Washington, DC.

## **513.43 RC&D Information and Management System**

### **a General**

NRCS has developed the Integrated Accountability System (IAS). A component of the IAS is the RC&D Information and Management System. This RC&D database is Web based; i.e., access, is through the Internet.

Information on how to access and use the RC&D Information and Management System can be found in Section [513.56](#), Exhibit G, RC&D Information and Management System Users Guide.

### **b Purpose and Use**

The primary purpose and use of this system is to assist Program Managers and Coordinators with program management, monitor accomplishments, provide information regarding congressional inquiries, prepare budget requests, and determine specifically how RC&D funds are being spent.

All RC&D activity undertaken should be included in this system. Councils are expected to share project information with the RC&D Coordinator to ensure accuracy of the data.

### **c Update Requirements**

The RC&D Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the RC&D Information and Management System is kept up to date. Coordinators are encouraged to have project information entered as soon as the project begins. Updates are required quarterly. State Conservationists and Coordinators will be informed through a national bulletin each year as to the quarterly due dates.

### **d Use by Non-Designated or Applicant RC&D Areas**

Applicant RC&D areas that are in various phases of applying for designation, and that are implementing projects, may use the system in order to begin showing progress.

### **e Performance Results and Management System (PRMS)**

The Performance Results and Management System (PRMS) is a part of IAS and tracks significant progress items from all programs, including RC&D. PRMS is used to track agency progress and to inform Congress and others of accomplishments on significant natural resource issues.

RC&D activities undertaken by the district conservationist or other field-level staff are entered in PRMS. Coordinators who work on programs other than RC&D enter progress data in PRMS. All RC&D activities undertaken by the Coordinator or other RC&D staff are to be entered in the RC&D Management and Information database.

## 513.44 Handling RC&D Council/Committee Funds and Financial Records

### a Policy Prohibitions

NRCS employees, as Federal staff, are prohibited from being responsible for RC&D Council and/or Committee funds. Funds payable to an RC&D Council and/or Committee should be directed to persons who are responsible for Council and/or Committee business activities. Although the employees may help the Council track project information that may include funds, they are not responsible for the official accounting information.

### b NRCS RC&D Office Assistant (Clerk or Secretary) as a Council Employee

The Council must follow the outside employment policies and procedures of NRCS whenever it proposes to hire an RC&D office assistant, secretary, or other office staff member whose duties are exclusively RC&D Council business.

### c Policy Basis

The NRCS policy prohibiting NRCS employees from handling funds or financial records of other organizations has been well established and is located in 180–GM, Part 401. The policy specifically references conservation districts, but does not mention RC&D Councils or Committees.

### d Specific Principles as the Basis for Policy

Specific principles that form the basis of this policy are as follows:

- NRCS and its employees are not to interfere in the internal affairs of other organizations. Handling funds or keeping official financial records for RC&D Council and/or Committees could be construed as interfering in the internal affairs of those organizations.
- NRCS employees are not to act outside of the scope of their employment. By handling the funds or official financial records of an RC&D Council and/or Committee, an NRCS employee is operating beyond the scope of his or her employment. Thus, NRCS would not be able to provide legal protection for the employee in the case of loss or misuse of RC&D Council and/or Committee funds.
- RC&D Council bylaws should provide clear direction that the financial recordkeeping and fund management responsibilities lie with the Council and/or in a specific Council position(s) (the Treasurer), not with an NRCS employee. The Council bylaws should also include provisions where neither the Coordinator or any federally provided office assistant or secretary shall be asked to commit the RC&D Council in its financial, planning, or employment affairs.

### e Policy Exceptions

The following are exceptions to policy:

Situation	Description

Situation	Description
Trust Fund Accounts and Agreements	<p>Advances to a trust fund account, or reimbursements by a Council/Committee or other cooperator for use by NRCS under terms of a duly executed agreement are exceptions to this policy. Such funds can be expended and accounted for by NRCS employees where there is a project or other agreement that provides for receipt of payment from an RC&amp;D Council and/or Committee to NRCS.</p> <p>Specifically, in such instances as bank deposit agreements where a sponsor's funds may be deposited for use in payments on a construction contract, an NRCS employee, usually the State Administrative Official, will handle checks received from RC&amp;D employee as the Collection Official and will handle checks received from RC&amp;D Council and/or Committees as payment under a reimbursable agreement. The responsibilities are assigned clearly in writing under the terms of an appointment or agreement.</p>
RC&D Council or Committee Grants	<p>RC&amp;D Coordinators need a working knowledge of Council and/or Committee grants and of progress toward successfully completing projects related to these grants. Coordinators should work with designated Council member(s) to gain needed knowledge but should not keep records that could be construed as official financial recordkeeping.</p>

## 513.45 Program Evaluation at the State Level

### a Program Accountability Needs

Program evaluation, which is necessary to maintain accountability, includes productivity analysis, benefits identification, and cost analysis to ensure that the RC&D Program is being implemented efficiently and effectively.

### b Conducting Program Evaluations

RC&D Program evaluations should be conducted by Program Managers as often as necessary in order to be accountable for program integrity. Three to five years of program data should be evaluated in order to get a realistic picture of RC&D progress.

### c Areas to Review and Evaluate

The following table shows areas that should be reviewed during RC&D Program evaluations, as a minimum. Section [513.60](#), Exhibit K: Guide for Program Appraisal, Assessment and Review of Resource Conservation and Development Offices is an example of the program evaluation or appraisal process and handbook developed by the New Mexico State Office. States are encouraged to use the information in this section and the appendix in designing their appraisal process.

Area	Element(s) to Review and Evaluate
RC&D Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total number of projects adopted, as an indicator of overall interest and activity in the RC&amp;D Program.</li> <li>• Ratio of projects completed to projects adopted. This indicates the need to further evaluate if and how RC&amp;D Councils are prioritizing workload.</li> <li>• Ratio of projects canceled to projects adopted. This <u>could</u> indicate ability of the RC&amp;D Council to complete projects or its ability to take action to keep priority projects moving.</li> </ul>
Annual Plan of Work	Is it current? What is the percentage of projects in the Annual Plan of Work that have goals consistent with the RC&D Area Plan? This analysis indicates the viability of the RC&D Area Plan and whether the RC&D Council is providing services consistent with area-wide needs. Note that Program Managers should be evaluating this when reviewing the Annual Plans of Work.
Annual Report	Has the Council produced an Annual Report each year? Does it reflect the activities outlined in the Annual Plan of Work?
Project Plans	Level of detail provided in project plans. This indicates if project planning is thorough enough to accomplish project objectives and identifies critical resources needed to accomplish objectives including staff time and money.

Area Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance of the RC&amp;D Area Plan. This may indicate if the RC&amp;D Council is attentive to changing conditions and needs of the Area. It should not be more than 5 years old.</li> <li>• Is public involvement documented in RC&amp;D Area Plan development?</li> <li>• Are links to other USDA agencies described?</li> <li>• Are the impacts and benefits reported by the RC&amp;D Coordinator. The scope and breadth should relate to the expectations in the Area Plan?</li> </ul>
Funding Sources	Ratio of NRCS RC&D investment to investment by other partners in projects. This indicates the ability of the RC&D Council to coordinate and utilize agencies, organizations, committees, and individuals to support RC&D projects.
Council Involvement	Council and/or Committee involvement in order to maintain or strengthen program opportunities at local, State and National levels. This indicates local involvement in a program that is intended to be locally led.
Council Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all Council positions filled?</li> <li>• Are all Council members attending meetings?</li> <li>• Is there a balance of interests represented?</li> <li>• Are there opportunities for tribal or minority membership on the Council?</li> <li>• What efforts are made to ensure high quality local leadership?</li> </ul>

Council Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the Area Plan current, and does it describe goals, objectives, and strategies?</li> <li>• Is the Council making progress toward these goals and objectives as stated in the Plan of Work?</li> <li>• Do the projects being implemented reflect the Council's goals?</li> <li>• Are outside funding resources being used?</li> <li>• When the Council has committees, are committee assignments being made and are the committees functioning successfully?</li> <li>• Is the Council using agencies other than NRCS to assist it?</li> <li>• Are projects being implemented in accordance with the project plan regardless of the source of funding?</li> <li>• Are Oversight and Management obligations being satisfied by the sponsors?</li> <li>• Is training being provided to Council members?</li> </ul>
NRCS Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all areas staffed with trained people working full time on RC&amp;D?</li> <li>• Is the RC&amp;D Office separate from NRCS offices? If in a USDA Field Service Center, is the location of the RC&amp;D Office as a separate entity clearly marked? Does the telephone answering system distinguish the Council Office from USDA?</li> <li>• Are databases, including the RC&amp;D Information and Management System, up to date?</li> <li>• Are informational materials and bulletins reaching all RC&amp;D Offices?</li> <li>• Are adequate project plans being written for all projects adopted?</li> <li>• Is the Coordinator's supervisor supporting the RC&amp;D effort?</li> </ul>

#### **d Program Evaluation Reports**

Program evaluation reports must be reviewed with the Coordinator, RC&D Council, and State Conservationist. Where deficiencies exist, the Program Manager, Coordinator, and Council should develop and implement a plan for corrective improvements. Actions must be implemented in order to remain viable for long-term RC&D Program support.

#### **e Results of Program Evaluations**

Positive results of a program evaluation include the identifying highly productive programs or project elements. The Program Manager should recognize superior Council efforts and



acknowledge the Coordinator's contribution to program success. Information on successful programs should be shared with State, regional, and national leaders.

## **513.46 RC&D Area Name Change**

### **a General**

When an RC&D Council wishes to change the official name of the Area, the Council should give careful consideration to the new RC&D Council and Area name. The proposed name should continue to reflect the counties composing the RC&D Area and be unique enough to avoid confusion with other local organizations.

### **b Name Change Criteria**

The new RC&D Area and Council names must meet the following criteria:

- The proposed name must be used to identify both the RC&D Council and the geographic area represented. The Council name must be the same as the designated RC&D Area name.
- Proposed names must be unique; i.e., they must not duplicate any designated RC&D area name. NHQ staff can assist in preventing duplication.

### **c Name Change Procedure**

Requests for official name changes must be forwarded through the State Conservationist to the Director, RCCD Division. The request must include the proposed name, an explanation of need for the change, and evidence of concurrence from the Council.

## 513.47 RC&D Area Changes

### a General

For better operation and management of the Area, it could become necessary to modify the size of an RC&D Area. This section establishes the guidelines for modifying the Area boundaries. It is important that changes of this type be recognized early and that the proper steps be taken to make the necessary changes. These changes may include:

- Expansions
- Consolidations
- Realignments
- Reductions
- Completions
- Withdrawals
- Independence

### b Definition

The following table provides the definitions for each of these actions as applied to RC&D.

Action	Definition
Expansion	An expansion of a RC&D Area is the addition of one or more contiguous administrative or jurisdictional boundaries (counties, parishes, and townships, etc.) to the area. Areas smaller than a county may be considered but are not encouraged.
Consolidation	A consolidation is combining two or more contiguous RC&D Areas to carry out the program more effectively.
Realignment	The shifting of counties from one designated RC&D Area to another designated RC&D Area must be approved by the Chief of NRCS. Requests should be submitted giving the rationale for the change, evidence that both Councils are in favor or the proposed change, and the State Conservationist's recommendation for action.
Reduction	A size reduction may be in order if some sponsors representing counties of designated RC&D Areas voluntarily withdraw from participation in the RC&D Program, or if it is determined that part of an RC&D area is not participating in the program and there is no nearby area with which to consolidate.
Completion	The Council may declare the effort "completed," when an RC&D Council determines that there is no longer a need to continue the program.

Withdrawal	Withdrawal of RC&D Program assistance means de-designation. The RC&D Area is ineligible for RC&D Program technical and financial assistance or specially designated technical or financial assistance. If there appears to be a need to reactivate the RC&D Area at a later date, the Area must reapply to the Secretary as a new RC&D Area.
Independence	Independence means voluntary withdrawal from the RC&D Program with mutual agreement from NRCS. The Council may discontinue receiving NRCS technical and/or financial assistance, administrative responsibilities, or funding from USDA. The Council may continue as a nongovernment corporation.

### c Information to Provide When Applying for an RC&D Area Boundary Change

Information to be included in applications for area changes include:

- Map showing the original geographic boundaries of the Area and the proposed change. The map should clearly identify the county or counties or other jurisdictional areas relevant in the State.
- Summary page. Briefly present information for the entire area—old Area plus proposed change (See Section [513.50](#), Exhibit A for example of an expansion.)
- Documentation that supports inclusion of the new county or counties or other changes. This should be a narrative that clearly supports and justifies the proposed change. Information should cover the reasons for change in the existing Area. A rewrite of the RC&D Area Plan or discussion of resources is not needed.
- Signature sheets. Include the standard signature block for each sponsor petitioning the Council [Section [513.12](#)], and a block for the Council's ratification of the application and notation of its willingness to accept the change.

### d Application Submission Process

The following table provides information for the process to follow for each of the possible RC&D Area changes.

Type Change	Procedure
Expansion	<p>The Council must submit one original signed and one copy of the application to the State Conservationist. The original signed application must be transmitted to the Chief of NRCS with a recommendation of the action that should be taken.</p> <p>The State Conservationist shall retain the copy of the application in the State Office. The Director, RC&amp;CD Division, shall provide acknowledgment to the State Conservationist that the application has been received and check the application for the required information.</p> <p>If the application is acceptable, the State Conservationist will be notified. The application will be held until it is acted upon by the Under Secretary. Applications that do not meet the above criteria will be returned to the State Conservationist for updating and correction.</p>

Type Change	Procedure
Consolidation or Realignment	<p>If it becomes necessary to combine Areas to solve common problems or to manage more effectively, an agreement must be reached with the involved Councils and the State Conservationist.</p> <p>The RC&amp;D Councils that are involved must submit a letter to the State Conservationist citing the reasons for consolidating the Area. The letter must include a map showing boundaries of the new RC&amp;D Area.</p> <p>The rationale for the consolidation must be included. Once the State Conservationist has concurred, the letter must be forwarded to the Chief for action.</p>
Reduction	<p>When the reduction involves a substantial part of the Area, the State Conservationist must review the situation to determine if it is feasible to continue to provide assistance to the remaining smaller geographic area. All Council members representing the geographic area under consideration for removal must concur with the request and the remaining RC&amp;D Area.</p>
Completions	<p>When a Council feels it has completed its work, it shall notify the State Conservationist of the decision, and a mutually agreeable completion date shall be established. The Council must approve a request for completion status.</p> <p>The Secretary of Agriculture has the sole authority to accept completions of RC&amp;D Areas.</p> <p>A letter of acknowledgment from the Secretary of Agriculture should be presented to the RC&amp;D Council by the State Conservationist.</p> <p>The appropriate databases will show that the Area has been completed, and that no further RC&amp;D funds shall be expended in the Area. If it appears that more work is needed at a later date, the area must reapply to the Secretary for designation as a new RC&amp;D Area.</p>

Type Change	Procedure
Withdrawals	<p>The State Conservationist is responsible for evaluating the RC&amp;D Program accomplishments and recommending to the Secretary, through the Chief of NRCS, withdrawal of RC&amp;D Areas when circumstances and conditions warrant.</p> <p>The Secretary has the sole authority and responsibility to withdraw RC&amp;D Program assistance if it is determined by the State Conservationist that RC&amp;D Program assistance is no longer needed or being utilized effectively.</p> <p>To withdraw RC&amp;D Program assistance, the following criteria will be provided by the State Conservationist to the Chief, NRCS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a designated RC&amp;D Area with an approved plan reports no significant accomplishments in any consecutive 12-month period</li> <li>• When an RC&amp;D Council fails to perform substantially according to procedures contained in its constitution or articles of incorporation and bylaws.</li> </ul> <p>The Secretary of Agriculture will act on recommendations from the Chief, NRCS.</p>
Independence	<p>When a Council feels that it is ready to become independent of USDA, it shall notify the State Conservationist of the decision, and a mutually agreeable separation date shall be established. The Council must approve a request for independence.</p> <p>The Secretary of Agriculture has the sole authority to accept independence requests of RC&amp;D Areas.</p> <p>A letter of acknowledgment from the Secretary of Agriculture should be presented to the Council by the State Conservationist.</p> <p>The appropriate databases will show the RC&amp;D Area has been completed and is independent. No further USDA RC&amp;D funds shall be expended in the area. If it appears that the Council wishes to receive assistance from USDA at a later date, the area must reapply to the Secretary for designation as a new RC&amp;D Area.</p>

### e Approval and Notification

The following table shows information about approvals and notifications of Area change requests.

<b>Type Change</b>	<b>Approvals and Notifications</b>
Expansions	When a decision is reached on Area expansions by the Under Secretary, all State Conservationists with applications on file will be notified of their State's results. When the expansion is approved, the Chief will notify the State Conservationist, who, in turn, will notify the Congressional delegation, sponsors, all agencies involved at the State level, and others as appropriate. The Director, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division (RCCD), will notify the Policy Advisory Board, the RC&D Working Group, and the National Association of RC&D Councils. If an application is disapproved, the Chief will notify the State Conservationist, who, in turn, will notify the Council. The reasons for disapproval will be specified.
Consolidation	The Chief has the authority to approve all consolidations. The NRCS State Conservationist will provide a recommendation for Area consolidation and notify the Chief.
Reduction	The Chief has the authority to approve all reductions. Where only a portion of the Area is withdrawn, the NRCS State Conservationist will notify the Chief and provide a recommendation to continue or to discontinue RC&D Program assistance in the remainder of the Area.
Completion	The State Conservationist will notify the Director, RCCD Division, who will prepare a letter of commendation.
Withdrawal	The State Conservationist (after consultation with the Council), will advise the Chief, NRCS, through the Director, RCCD Division, if it has been found that conditions warrant withdrawal of an Area from the RC&D Program. The State Conservationist will provide written documentation supporting the findings. The Chief will notify the State Conservationist, who, in turn, will notify the RC&D Council of the Secretary's action.
Independence	After consulting the Council, the State Conservationist will advise the Chief, NRCS, through the Director, RCCD Division. The State Conservationist will provide written documentation of request for independence from USDA. The Chief will notify the State Conservationist, who, in turn, will notify the RC&D Council of the Secretary's action.

## **513.48 Other Administrative Issues**

### **a Use of NRCS Vehicles by RC&D Council Members and Staff**

The NRCS GM-360, Part 428.2(c), specifies that volunteers may be authorized to operate a Government vehicle on official business. No agreement is required. Therefore, an RC&D Council member or Council staff may use an NRCS-owned vehicle while performing work as an *Earth Team Volunteer* as long as the requirements in 360-GM, Part 428 are met.

### **b Clearances Needed**

The Coordinator must clear the use of the vehicle with the State Conservationist. The State Conservationist determines what constitutes official business based on details and circumstances of a particular situation.



## **Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart F RC&D Exhibits**

[513.50 Exhibit A – Application for RC&D Program Assistance](#)

[513.51 Exhibit B – USDA Policy Advisory Board Agencies Memorandum of Understanding](#)

[513.52 Exhibit C – RC&D Coordinator Position Description](#)

[513.53 Exhibit D – Title XV, Subtitle H, Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, as Amended](#)

[513.54 Exhibit E – USDA Departmental Regulation 1042-076, RC&D Policy Advisory Board](#)

[513.55 Exhibit F – USDA Programs Matrix](#)

[513.56 Exhibit G – RC&D Information and Management System User's Guide, Release 1.3](#)

[513.57 Exhibit H – RC&D Information and Management System Data Dictionary](#)

[513.58 Exhibit I – Glossary and List of Acronyms](#)

[513.59 Exhibit J – National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) Opinion and RC&D Areas](#)

[513.60 Exhibit K – Guide for Program Appraisals, Assessment and Review of RC&D Offices](#)

## **Part 513 – Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

### **Subpart F RC&D Exhibits**

#### **513.50 Exhibit A—Application for RC&D Program Assistance**

Click [here](#) to obtain an example copy of the Cover Page.

Click [here](#) to obtain an example copy of the Transmittal Page.

Click [here](#) to obtain an example copy of the Summary Page.

Click [here](#) to obtain an example copy of the Required Clauses.

Click [here](#) to obtain an example copy of the Summary Page for a Request for Expansion.

#### **513.51 Exhibit B – USDA Policy Advisory Board Agencies Memorandum of Understanding**

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the PAB Agencies Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **513.52 Exhibit C – RC&D Coordinator Position Description**

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the Coordinator Position Description.

#### **513.53 Exhibit D - Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Title II, Section 2505: Resource Conservation and Development Program**

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the law passed by Congress in 2002 that relates to the RC&D Program.

#### **513.54 Exhibit E – USDA Department Regulation on RC&D Policy Advisory Board**

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of Departmental Regulation 1042-76.

#### **513.55 Exhibit F – USDA Programs Matrix**

Click [here](#) to see an overview.

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the USDA Programs Matrix.

**513.56 - Exhibit G – RC&D Information and Management System User's Guide for Release 1.4**

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the User's Guide for Release 1.4.

**513.57 Exhibit H – Reserved - RC&D Information and Management System Data Dictionary**

**513.58 Exhibit I – Glossary and List of Acronyms**

To view CPM, Part 502, General Glossary and List of Acronyms, click [here](#).

**513.59 Exhibit J –National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and RC&D Areas**

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the NEPA policy opinion.

**513.60 Exhibit K – Guide for Program Appraisal, Assessment and Review of Resource Conservation and Development Offices**

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the Cover Sheet.

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the Introduction.

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the Instructions.

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the RC&D Appraisal Activities.

Click [here](#) to obtain a copy of the RC&D Appraisal Worksheet.